



Native Warm Season Grass Field Border – Chester County

Benefits

- Creates corridor for wildlife movement.
- Provides wildlife food and cover.
- Reduces inputs on lower production land.
- Produces hay.
- Provides habitat for beneficial insects.
- Reduces erosion (particularly by eliminating turn rows).
- Improves water quality.
- Provides access (e.g., turn rows and scouting).

Guidelines

Location

- To maximize wildlife benefits, plant field borders around the entire field. Connect existing areas of suitable wildlife habitat.
- An irregular edge will help prevent water flow down the outside edge of the vegetated field border.

Width

- Minimum width 30 feet.
- Increase width to provide ample turning space for wider equipment.
- Increase width to at least 50 feet if nesting habitat (quail, wild turkey) is a purpose of the field border.
- A shrub component of the border should be at least 10 feet wide.
- Shrub and native warm season grass border widths should be doubled for planned periodic livestock grazing.

Vegetation

Select plant species based on the desired uses and benefits of the border. Vegetation can vary within the border. Following is a list of plants commonly used to meet intended functions of a field border. The list is intended as a guide and not to be considered a complete list.

Native Warm Season Grasses (Mix) and Legumes	4.5 - 6 lbs./ac. and 0.5 lbs./ac.	March 1-July 1
Orchardgrass	5 lbs./ac.	Feb. 20-Apr. 1
Timothy	4 lbs./ac.	
Kobe Lespedeza	15 lbs./ac.	
Orchardgrass	10 lbs./ac.	Feb. 20-Apr. 1
White Clover	2 lbs./ac.	Aug.15-Oct. 1
Switchgrass	6 lbs./ac.	March 1-July 1
Kobe or Korean Lespedeza	25 lbs./ac. or 15 lbs./ac.	Feb. 20-Apr. 1
Shrubs	3' to 8' spacing	Nov. 1-Apr. 1
Shrub Lespedeza Plant or Seed	3' x 3' or 12 lbs./ac.	Nov. 1-Apr. 1 March 1- May 1

- For integrated pest management, use a mixture of native wildflowers that provides blooms spring through fall.

Establishment

Select the seedbed preparation technique based on the land condition. Shape gullies and rills during border establishment. Some native warm season grasses may use a specialized no-till drill for establishment.

Land slopes of <5%.

- ❖ Conventional seedbed preparation. Disk then cultipack before and after seeding.
- ❖ Minimum tillage or no tillage techniques.
- ❖ Where no erosion hazards exist, natural regeneration may be established by using an approved herbicide on existing undesirable vegetation or by idling the border area.

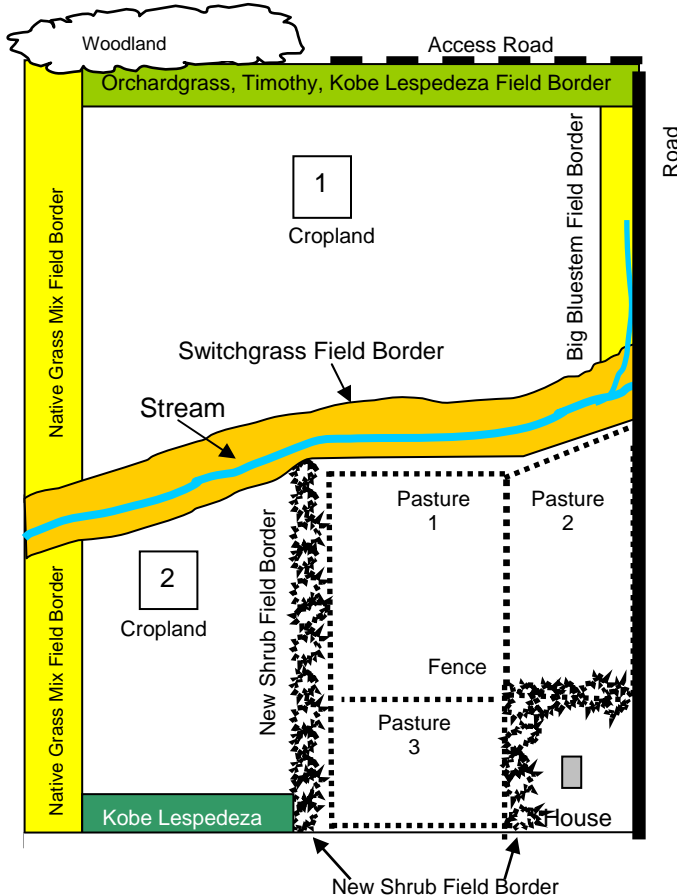
Land slopes of >5%.

- ❖ Minimum tillage or no tillage techniques recommended.

Field Border for Wildlife

Example

Plan field borders to meet total resource needs. This example is provided to illustrate planning for multiple objectives and considering adjacent habitats.



Fertility

- Apply lime and fertilizer based on current soil test for establishment of introduced grasses and legumes. In the absence of a soil test, apply a rate of 2 tons of agricultural lime and 30-60-60 lbs. of N, P₂O₅, and K₂O per acre.
- Native warm season grasses/native legumes DO NOT require lime when soil pH is above 5.5.

- Do not apply nitrogen to native warm season grasses/native legumes or shrubs during establishment.

MAINTENANCE ITEMS

General

- Maintain fertility levels as needed by including the border in the field's fertilization program.
- Shut off sprayers and raise tillage equipment when traveling on borders.
- Periodically remove trees that may invade borders.
- Control weeds by mowing to a height of 8-12 inches for native warm season grasses or apply targeted herbicides.
- Shape and reseed any gullies or rills that develop in the border.
- If water runoff creates erosion at the edge of the vegetated field border, install measures to maintain sheet flow at the border/crop interface. These measures may need to extend a short distance into the crop field to redirect runoff into the field border.

Wildlife

- To protect ground nesting birds, delay mowing until after August 15.
- To protect wildlife cover, do not mow, disk, or hay more than 1/3 of the field borders each year. Rotate these activities year to year.
- Mow shrub lespedeza borders once every three years in early spring while dormant. Rotationally mow to maintain plant diversity.

Complementary Practices

Residue Management
Grassed Waterway
Filter Strip
Contour Buffer Strip

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